

Yale

March 5, 2015

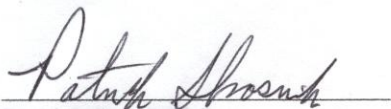
Dear Honorable Members of the Appropriations Committee:

I am writing this letter to address the proposed cuts to the Connecticut Mental Health Center (CMHC) component of the DMHAS budget. I kindly ask you to restore the support for clinical and research programming at CMHC.

I am a clinical neuroscientist and substance abuse researcher in the Yale School of Medicine. A large portion of my NIH-funded research on the neural underpinnings of mental illness and substance abuse takes place at the CMHC. In particular, the Clinical Neuroscience Research Unit (CNRU) at CMHC provides vital infrastructure to implement high-level brain and behavior research on substance use and mental illness, two of the largest issues affecting public health in Connecticut. While I understand the need to balance state budgets, reducing funding to the CMHC will deleteriously affect treatment and research in these areas of clinical neuroscience. Further, these cuts will make it more difficult to obtain competitive federal grant funding to sustain research at the CMHC (since vital resources will diminish). Besides providing resources for important research, such federal grants (e.g. from NIDA and NIMH) bring revenue to Connecticut and create jobs. As mentioned in a separate letter and testimony from the chair of my department, Dr. John Krystal, indirect costs generated by federal grants to CMHC research programs generate approximately \$900,000 for the Connecticut General Fund, and these funds would be lost if research programs collapsed in the wake of the proposed cuts.

In sum, the proposed budget cuts to CMHC would decimate its clinical and research programs. I therefore urge the committee to reconsider the proposed cuts to this vital resource.

Sincerely,



Patrick D. Skosnik, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
Department of Psychiatry
Yale University School of Medicine
Email: patrick.skosnik@yale.edu